

**ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΚΟ
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BACHELOR THESIS

Far-Left Party Family in Europe

The socioeconomic factors of far-left voting

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Abstract

Radical left parties (RLPs) and radical right parties (RRPs) have been significant actors in many European party systems. However, the existing studies focus on a particular aspect of the far-left family at the time (e.g. Left-wing populism, New Radical Left) and observe only the more prominent and successful parties. This thesis considers all far-left parties as a part of the same political group. It includes a complete dataset of far-left parties in the 27 country-members of European Union, as well as UK, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, from 2000 until 2014. It also includes minor political parties that have not been identified before. In the second part, it provides a cross-national empirical account of the variation in voting for RLPs across Europe, based on country-level data and NUTS2-dimensional aggregated data. It evaluates the effect of key socioeconomic variables on the RLP vote during the period 2002-2012 for both European and Parliamentary elections. The findings give evidence for the two main questions concerning far-left support. Is the traditional class cleavage still an essential factor of voting behaviour? Does support for RLPs appear as a protest vote during periods of economic distress? The results indicate that the far-left family keeps its traditional profile and still owns economic issues, such as income redistribution, taxation and labour rights. However, when it comes to periods of economic recession, RLPs may lose support. Moreover, this thesis shows that the class cleavage is diminishing; manual workers do not seem importantly attracted by the left-wing ideology anymore. Immigration and radical right party competition may be the reason.

This thesis shows the general tendencies of far-left support between 2002 and 2012. After 2012, populist left-wing parties gained ground; further analysis is needed on how these parties may have changed RLPs image and support.

Keywords: parties; radical left; Europe; electoral success; socioeconomic factors; class cleavage

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INTRODUCTION

During the last decade, the European far-left seems to have risen from the ashes. The economic crisis was an excellent opportunity for radical left parties, which claim to own economic issues from labour rights to income inequality. Indeed their support was increased and played the role of a protest vote against austerity measures (Beaudonne and Gomez, 2015). Moreover, it was the left-wing populist parties that saw the more significant electoral success, which even offered them public office and government participation (e.g. Podemos in Spain, SYRIZA in Greece)

Contrary to Radical Right Parties, Radical Left Parties have not received much attention. Both RRP and RLP severely criticise the mainstream political scene and seem to find fertile ground in periods of economic distress. RRP and RLP are against globalisation and promote trade morality and state interference. Nevertheless, the critique of RRP concentrates on cultural and nationalistic issues; they do criticise the current economic policies, but they do not seem to promote a particular alternative to capitalism, other than a less globalised economy. Empirical studies attribute their success to anti-migration discourse.

On the other hand, RLPs are radical because they oppose the current order and advocate an alternative economic and political system (March, 2012; Fagerholm, 2017). RLPs may as well promote some social issues like egalitarianism, anti-imperialism, and environmentalism, but they always keep the economic perspective as their core. (Chiocchetti, 2017) The way they combine those issues or the degrees in which they advocate them, however, may differ significantly.

Far-left party family is indeed fragmented, and its particular features pose difficulties in both its theoretical and empirical analysis. Most studies, explaining the roots and dimensions of the far-left family, focus either on Western or Eastern Europe. Their different history and political past create different cleavages and social party ties. (Gomez et al., 2015) Moreover, data are often missing, or the existing far-left parties are not electorally significant to be considered as stable and universally accepted as part of a political family. (Fagerholm, 2017) Moreover, even the western far-left parties show a significant variation. They tend to own a variety of issues from labour rights and income redistribution to environmentalism to socialist revolution to nationalistic views. The question is if those differences are significant enough to divide far-left parties into separate political groups or families. March 2012 finds four subgroups: Conservative Communist, Reform Communist, Democratic Socialist, Populist Socialist and Social Populist; Fagerholm 2017: Conservative Communist, Reform Communist, “OLD” Democratic Socialist and “NEW” Democratic Socialist; Gomez, et al. 2015 does a more straightforward division: Old Left versus New Left Radical Left parties.

Left-wing populism is one more thing that interests scholars. Do populist radical left parties belong in the same group as other RLPs or should form a separate political family? Comparative studies show that populism can be strongly associated with the core radical right- and left-wing ideologies. (Charalambous and Ioannou, 2019; Salmela and Scheve, 2018; Stavrakakis et al., 2017) Populist discourse can also be found in mainstream parties -

especially in times of crisis when the public sentiment is more hostile. However, radical parties tend to use populist rhetoric more intensively. A party's radicalism may affect its degree of populism (Rooduijn and Akkerman, 2015), but that is not enough to conceive populist parties as a unique party family. Populism is a "thin" ideology or a political strategy. (Muddle and Kaltwasser, 2017)

Once one conceives radical left parties as a unified party family, one can explain their political success and study the profiles of their electorate. Like their theoretical analysis, the empirical studies of far-left parties focus on particular subgroups. (Sperber, 2010; Bowyer and Vail, 2011; Botella and Ramiro, 2003; Backes and Moreau, 2008) The studies by Visser et al. 2014 and Ramiro 2014 do use a comparative cross-national approach. Analysing individual data, they found similar results and changes in the traditional class cleavage. Visser et al. 2014 also used country-level data, for which not a significant association was found. The study showed, however, that RLPs tend to take support from protest voters during economic hardship. March and Rommerskirchen 2012 are the only study utterly concentrated on aggregate data in both Western and Eastern Europe. It focuses on external demand and support factors and finds a significant association among radical left voting, unemployment and political antagonism with other parties.

March 2012 sums up all the above issues. He supports that RLPs are similar enough to form a distinguished European political family and relevant enough to be observed. He studies RLPs as a unified party family throughout Western and Eastern Europe, and analyses the electoral success of RLPs. This thesis has a similar structure.

Chapter one analyses the particularities of far-left party family, and presents the existing RLPs in the 27 member-states of the European Union plus UK, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. Based on the opinion of other experts and case studies, this thesis also focuses on minor far-left parties. Previous studies have only observed the more successful parties, alas the ones that have gotten more than the 3% of the national vote. Nevertheless, the far-left party family is mainly associated with various party splits due to ideological differences, organisational jealousies, and conflicts on the strategy of centre-left alliances. (Chiocchetti, 2017) With that in mind, I also identify every minor far-left party in Europe from 2002-2013. The complete dataset is then used in the second chapter, an empirical study explaining the electoral support of RLPs; it is a cross-national study using aggregate data both in nuts2 dimensional and country level. Chapter two reviews the role of some potentially influential variables that are thought to be linked to electoral support for RLPs on the demand side. The following section presents the data and the methodology used. The last part presents the relevant results and conclusion.

Chapter I: The Far Left Party Family

The Radical Left Party Family

A definition

“Far-left parties are those that define themselves as to the left of, and not merely on the left of social democracy, which they see as insufficiently left-wing or even as not left-wing at all.” (March 2008) Left parties advocate the need for state intervention in the market economy and redistribution. The far-left parties do not think that the amount of state intervention in social democratic policies is enough. They either demand more radical measures or propose an alternative economic and social system.

According to Fagerholm 2017, radical left parties today should be distinguished by their emphasis on new left issues. In Western Europe, RLPs are those who lead in issues like the anti-growth economy, environmental protection, trade morality, social justice and anti-imperialism. The old issues, like market regulation, economic planning, Marxist analysis and labour groups, are supported only in a small degree and by a small number of parties. After the fall of communism, left parties wanted to escape the ‘guilt by association’. However, far-left parties can still be defined by their support for a systematic change of the capitalistic and neo-liberal system either adopting the “new left” or the “old left” ideas. Even though both far-right and far-left parties share the same anti-establishment and anti-elitist attitudes, the RLPs combine their critique with socioeconomic issues whereas the RRP with cultural issues and especially concerns about immigration.

The subtypes

Scholars usually divide far-left parties into two main subtypes: radical and extreme left parties. Radical left parties ask for democratic reforms like a direct democratic system and political reforms against the mainstream elites and in favour of the people. In economic issues, they don’t support a centralized economy, but rather a mixed market economy with more significant state intervention and small or medium-sized enterprises, and they oppose themselves to globalization and privatizations. On the other hand, extreme left parties denounce any market organization, and they are against any compromise with neo-liberal policies. Moreover, they encourage the extra-parliamentary struggle and the revolutionary actions of the people towards social democracy. Even though there are not a lot of successful extreme far-left parties in Europe, almost every country has minor extreme organizations and parties.

Except for those two main categories, there are various other subgroups in the existing bibliography. Following March 2012 the far-left parties can be characterized by five different subtypes. The “Conservative” or “orthodox” communist are parties that want to “conserve” the former Soviet and Marxist model of political and social organization. The “Reform”

communist, on the other hand, they have discarded aspect of the Soviet model and adopted new left issues. Democratic socialist parties find themselves in opposition both to the totalitarianism of communist parties and to the “neo-liberal” social democracy. Parties belonging in this group adopt both old and new left issues.

The category of Populist Socialist parties is close to the Democratic Socialist, and we could also consider the first a subgroup of the latter. The difference is that they also have a populist ideology, meaning that they divide society between the moral, pure people and the elite and the establishment. Last, there is the category of Social Populist parties. Those parties are closer to classical populist movements; they don't have a stable organization, and they usually rely on the strong presence of a leader. Their ideology is not coherent; they want to present themselves as “catch-all” parties, with both left and right ideas, working for the “people”. Those two reasons cause essential problems to the relevance of social populist parties. Some of the parties belonging to this group, according to March 2012 are characterized as far-right parties by other scholars because they support nationalistic attitudes.

The above categories are not coherent and create doubts concerning if we should define a distinguished far-left political family. Hence, in contrast to March, other scholars have questioned the existence of a homogeneous far-left group. Gomez et al. 2015 empirically studied this question. Combining data from the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP), the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) and the European Election Studies (EES), they answered two questions: Are RLPs significantly heterogeneous in terms of their programmatic appeals? If they are, and thus appeal to different ideological and policy priorities, do the social background and attitudinal features of the voters also differ across RLP subtypes?

Based on their findings, RLPs should be categorized into two subtypes: the New Left RLPs and the Traditional RLPs, depending on the issues they emphasize. However, both of them do belong in the same broad group sharing common features. Their voters are also alike. They present, however, some interesting differences: New Left parties are more successful between more educated voters. Traditional Left parties are relatively more Eurosceptic than New Left. In the left-right scale, New Left voters are more centrist in relative terms.

Populism in the Far-left family

Following the economic recession, a wave of populist parties emerged from both left and right political groups. Populist parties are critical of the establishment and want to defend the “people” against it. They divide citizens in the “good” and “bad”, and they present themselves as the only real voice of the “real”, “good” people. What distinguishes left and right populists are the criteria they use to make this division. (Carlos de la Torre 2019) There is still an open debate if populism is an ideology, or it is more a strategic attitude, a type of political communication. If we see populism as an ideology, we can form a separate Populist Party family. If one supports the idea that populism is a way of political communication, it is not possible to identify a populist mode of political mobilization or organization. (Muddle 2015; Zaslove 2008; Stanley 2008; Kitschelt 2002)

Stijn van Kessel 2014 on the concept of populism to the contemporary European party systems distinguishes three different degrees or manifestations of populism. On the top of his ladder of abstraction of populist manifestations, there are the parties that use populist

discourse as a political strategy. In the middle, parties that regularly use populist rhetoric, and populism has begun their “raison d’être”. Then in the last level of the ladder, there are “various party families that have populism as a defining feature”, like ‘populist radical right’, ‘neoliberal populism’ and ‘social populism’. Those parties combine the “thin” or “chameleonic” populist ideology with their core ideology.

The radical left and right parties seem to fall in that last category. The way they choose to divide “the people”, affirms their core ideology. Right populist parties link their message to themes concerning immigrants; they use criteria of ethnicity, and they exclude minority populations. (Wodak, et al. 2015) On the other hand, left-populist parties construct the category of the “good” people as the majorities of their nations that were excluded by neoliberal or austerity policies imposed by supranational organizations like the IMF or the Troika (Ramiro and Gomez 2016).

Concluding, parties that respond to the definition of far-left parties are coherent enough, and I consider them as a part of the same political family. Parties belonging in the particular categories of Populist Socialist or Social Populist as defined by March also belong in the same far-left family. However, some of them, and especially parties in Central and Eastern Europe belonging in the Social Populist category, require further analysis, and they have been excluded.

The far-left family in Eastern Europe

Political history in Eastern Europe is very different. According to the United Statistics Division, Eastern Europe includes the countries of Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine. There are various definitions, but for this research, it would be more suitable to define as “Eastern European” the countries under former communist regimes.

In contrast to Western Europe, those countries didn’t have the time to stabilize their political party systems. The traditional political and social cleavages are not as clear as in western societies, and there are still changing and unclear structures of interest. (Cook 2006) As a result populist and “catch-all” parties are common, and their appeal prevents the establishment of any genuine radical far-left parties.

Voters in Eastern European countries can still identify themselves in the right-left political scale. Nevertheless, the definition of left may be slightly different. First, left parties in ex-communist countries had to prove their disapproval of socialism that gave them a greater incentive to follow economic austerity policies and be more willing to engage in the free market. (Tavits and Letki 2009) Second, the social issues usually supported by left-wing parties, are not a big part of left parties in ex-communist countries. Their parties tend to focus almost exclusively on economic issues. (Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2010) Lastly, as further details included in the next dataset show, the far-left parties in those countries have strong tendencies to left-wing populism and left-wing nationalism. That confuses their classification. Furthermore, even the far-left parties that can be classified are not significant or successful enough. Consequently, most of the scholars studying far-left parties choose not to include eastern European parties. However, especially after 2000, globalization, EU’s geopolitical pull and the prospect of integration have caused a convergence in the party arena. (Lewis 2000;

Mudde 2007; March 2012). In consequence, and with the purpose to study far-left parties in Europe as a whole, this study also includes ex-communist countries.

The Dataset

The primary dataset used is in March 2012. Other experts are followed too for every country or party separately in order to classify minor parties or any other far-left party that the initial March dataset did not include. I divide the radical and extreme left parties when possible. This dataset offers a complete view of the existing RLPs, and it increases the observations for the empirical study in Chapter 2. Finally, this dataset also includes new RLPs that unfortunately, the final study doesn't include because their electoral support was missing. I mark the included party observations with '*.'

– Austria

The Socialist Left Party* (PSL) and the Austrian Labor Party (PdA) are EFL. Both are minor parties, and as it comes to my concern, there are not any experts who have studied them. Their programs and manifestos include phrases like "takeover of the entire system by the public sector under the control of employees" and "the main goal of the socialist revolution and the building of socialism" which aligns with the definition of extreme parties. The Communist Party of Austria* is also considered as a far-left party since its program supports that a radical change is needed and the neoliberal culture of production has to be broken. According to (Weisskircher 2016), KOP had been somewhat successful because it owns the issue of houses in Styria, a state in the southeast of Austria. The Electoral Leftist Alliance (LINKE)* has also been observed. It was a minor coalition of left-wing movements and activists, such as the Communist Initiative, the Socialist Left Party and the League of the Socialist Revolution.

– Belgium

The Workers Party of Belgium* (PDVA- PTB) is at first an extreme far-left party. In its program for the legislative elections of 2003 talks about the need of social economy and democratic reform, and emphasizes at the idea that people need to turn down the neoliberal system. From the legislative elections of 2007 becomes a radical far-left party. The party was transformed and started building networks with other radical parties, like the Dutch Socialist Party, Die Linke in Germany and Syriza in Greece. The Left Socialist Party* (PSL/LSP) is an EFR. According to its program, it wants to offer a social alternative through workers struggle that will create a capture with the current capitalist system. PSL/LSP has also formed a coalition with the Revolutionary Communist League* (LCP). In 2010 the "Front de gauche"* was created, a coalition by syndicates, left-wing activists and the following parties: the Communist Party (PC), the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the Left Socialist Party (PSL), the Committee for Another policy, the Humanist Party (PH), and the party Vélorution. I observed both of these coalitions and considered them as extreme left parties. Their classification was intuitive, based on their support for workers revolutionary movements against the liberal order.

- Bulgaria

The Bulgarian Socialist Party, the leader in the Coalition for Bulgaria, was classified as a radical far-left party until the parliamentary elections of 2001. (March 2012) Coalition for Bulgaria cannot be identified as radical left anymore since its goal is to unite left and centre-left parties. (Spirova 2008) Bulgaria also has a lot of minor orthodox extreme communist parties or coalitions of them. In the study, I include the Bulgarian Workers' Socialist Party* (BWSP), the Bulgarian Communist Party "Fatherland"* (BCP_F) and the Bulgarian Workers' Party* (BWP). A particular case in Bulgaria's politics is ATAKA. There is not a full consensus between the academics if it is a left or a right party. Its position towards NATO and EU and its efforts to build a better relationship with Russia resembles orthodox communist parties. (Ghodsee 2008) However, it believes in state sovereignty in economic policy, approaches economic problems from a nationalist perspective, and it does not refer to the class struggle (Marinos, 2015). Therefore it is often identified as a far-right party. This study, following the Georgiadou et al. 2018 classification, considers it as a radical far-right party.

- Croatia

Croatia has significant far-left parties. (March, 2012) However, this dataset identifies four minor parties as far-left. Three new parties Worker's Front (2014), New Left (2016) and Zagreb Is Ours (2017) may signal the start of a new radical left platform in Croatia (Buble et al. 2018). However, they are very new organizations, and there is not enough evidence to be classified. This study also classifies the Socialist Labor Party* (SRP) as a radical far-left party based on its declarations and statements. Specifically, in the 2015's Party Declaration, it states that Trade Union participation should be compulsory. The state should intervene as much as necessary in economic life and reject any privatization.

- Cyprus

Cyprus has only one radical FLP and one of the most successful ones: Progressive Party of the Working People* (AKEL). (March 2012)

- Czech Republic

The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia* (KSČM) was an extreme conservative communist party until 2005 and then an extreme reformist communist party. (March, 2012) The dataset also includes the Party of Democratic Socialism* (SDS). It is a radical far-left party. Its manifestos support democracy, political and social rights but also make clear that the party is fundamentalist opponent of capitalism and ask people to liberate themselves from the ways of capitalistic production.

- Denmark

The Socialist People's Party* (SF) and the Red-Green Alliance-Unity List* are radical and extreme left parties respectively. (March, 2012) The Red- Green Alliance- Unity List is considered extreme left until the 2007 legislative elections. For the elections of 2011 is considered radical. The Workers' Communist Party of Denmark (APK) and the Communist

Party are minor parties for which I could not gather information from other expert's articles and studies. However, according to their websites, both aim to a transition to socialism, and they present themselves as extreme left parties. Finally, Folkeringen is a new radical movement and party inspired by Podemos.

– Estonia

Estonian United Left Party* (EÜVP) and Estonian United People's Party* (EÜRP) have been both classified as radical RLPs. (March 2012)

– Finland

Left Alliance* (V) is a radical far-left party (March 2012). The Greens is also a post-industrial radical far-left party. The Greens may prioritize the environment, but they are not a pure green party since they also cover a lot of economic and social issues (Kim O.K. Zilliacus, 2001). They reject economic growth, they support the creation of flexible democratic structures closer to direct democracy, and they would like to see the EU enforcing an eco-tax and act as a counterbalance to the market economy. Finland also has three minor communist parties. The Communist Workers Party* (KTP) and the Communist League* are orthodox communist parties believing in workers struggle and a new communist society. The Communist Party of Finland* (SKP) is a reform communist party. In its program in 2007, it criticizes the Soviet Union and talks about a modern Socialism with social economy and sustainable economy.

– France

March 2012 identifies two far-left parties: the Communist Party* (PCF) as a radical far-left party and the New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) as an extreme far-left party. However, France has a vibrant radical left political scene. PCF leads in the Front de gauche, a radical left coalition in the European Parliament, along with the Parti de gauche (Left Party) (PG) and the Gauche Unitaire (United Left) (GU). The Left party, United Left, Republic and Socialism, Federation for a Social and Ecological Alternative, Worker's Struggle* (LO), Revolutionary Communist League* (LCR) and the French Communist Party of Workers (POCF) are only some of the minor radical and extreme far-left parties that exist in France (Pascal 2014). Most of those organizations were founded during the previous financial crisis. Unfortunately, detailed election results from the more recent elections weren't available. The final empirical study includes only the Communist Party, the Revolutionary Communist League and the Worker's Struggle.

– Germany

The Party of Democratic Socialism* (PDS), as the successor of the ruling Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) in East Germany, is considered as a radical far-left party. In 2007 it merged with the Electoral Alternative for Labor and Social Justice (WASG) to a new party called The Left* (LINKE), which is a radical far-left party (March 2012). Germany also has one Trotskyist party, the Socialist Equality Party* (PSG), and two anti-revisionist communist

parties, the Marxist–Leninist Party of Germany* (MLPD) and the German Communist Party* (DKP).

– Greece

Greece has a wide variety of radical left parties, either concentrated in old or new political issues. March 2012 gives us two of the most successful far-left parties in Greece: the Communist Party of Greece* (KKE) classified as a conservative extremist far-left party and the Syriza* classified as a radical far-left party until 2015. After 2015, some radical left-wing members left Syriza and formed their radical parties, like Popular Unity (LAE) which is against NATO, the EU and the globalization and supports the formation of new, more socialist labour laws (Moschonas, 2013) and the Course of Freedom (Plefsi Eleftherias). Except for KKE, Greece also has a significant number of minor extremist Marxist and Trotskyist parties, such as the Workers Revolutionary Part* (EEK), the Organization for the Reconstruction of the Communist Party of Greece* (OAKKE), the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Greece* (mlKKE) and the –almost identical- Communist Party of Greece (Marxist-Leninist)* (KKEmI). According to Panayiotakis 2015, there are also: the Internationalist Workers' Left (DEA), the Communist Organization of Greece (KOE) and the Front of the Greek Anti-capitalistic Left* (ANTARSYA). Synaspismos* is also a radical far-left party until 2013 (Moschonas, 2013). Today a part of Synaspismos is merged in Unified Popular Front (EPAM) and another in Syriza.

– Hungary

Hungarian Worker's Party* (Munkáspárt) is a minor orthodox communist party. It is in favour of China and accuses "the capitalistic political order" of propaganda against communism. A new party, Politics Can Be Different (LMP), founded in 2009, could also be a far-left party. It is mainly a green party but embraces the left ideology and rejects the current economic model and globalization in the name of environmental protection. (Fabian, 2010) The party has not been self-identified, and there isn't enough evidence to be classified with confidence.

– Iceland

Iceland has two radical FRP: the Left-Green Alliance* (VG) (Andreas Fagerholm 2017; March 2012) and the Rainbow* (RB). Rainbow was founded in 2013 by former members of VG who shared more Eurosceptic ideas. In its Policy Statement, the Rainbow emphasizes all key issues of the left and shares a more radical opinion towards European institutions and market economy.

– Ireland

The Socialist Party* (SP) is an extreme far-left party and Sinn Féin* (SF) a radical far-left party (March 2012). Éirígí is a new socialist, eurosceptic and environmentalist party, which is a radical far-left party (McCabe 2015). Workers' Party* (WP) and Socialist Worker's Party* (SWP) manifestos and party statements also indicate that they are extreme orthodox communist parties. What is important about Ireland's left political scene is the appearance of

various left movements and anti-austerity movements during the crisis in the last decade. Organizations like that are People Before Profit and Solidarity.

– Italy

Italy has five identified radical far-left parties: the Party of Communist Refoundation (PRC) and the Party of Italian Communists (PdCI) (March 2012), Left Ecology Freedom (Andreas Fagerholm, 2017; Tsakatika and Lisi, 2013), L'Altra Europa – Con Tsipras (Beaudonne and Gomez 2015) and the Workers' Communist Party* (PCL). PCL's manifesto states its support for social revolution and communist political and economic model. The Five Star Movement (M5S) could also be a radical left-wing party. M5S is a particular case with many contradictions. It started as an "anti-party", initially emphasizing on environmental issues, endorsement of radical democracy and criticism of the current economic system. However, it also endorses views typically supported by radical right parties, such as criticism of immigration, hard stance against the political class and opposition to the EU (Gagliardi, 2016). The common consensus between academics is that the M5S is a populist "catch-all" party (Franzosi et al. 2015; Lanzone and Woods 2015; Bordignon and Ceccarini 2013). According to Nicola Maggini 2014, M5S reached left-wing and far-left voters during the first years of its existence (2011 and 2012), when it was mostly known as a social movement. However, in February 2013, 35,3% of its supporters were self-placed in the left, 18,8% in the centre, 29,7% in the right and 16,2% weren't self-placed. Therefore M5S is not considered as left-wing in this dataset. Unfortunately, due to a lack of data about electoral support, only the PCL has been observed in the main study.

– Latvia

Latvia has two extreme far-left parties, Latvian Socialist Party* (DP) and Latvian Unity Party (March 2012). Latvian Unity Party dissolved in 2001. Latvian Socialist Party participated in the elections either as a member of the social-democratic, centre-left Harmony Centre coalition (parliamentary election 2006, 2010, 2011) either as a member in the Latvian Russian Union (parliamentary election 2002). Since the votes in the data represent the support of the coalitions as a whole, it is not possible to measure the support for the party. The empirical study includes it in the European elections of 2004.

– Lithuania

Lithuania has only one social populist, radical far-left party the Labor Party* (DP). (March 2012)

– Luxembourg

The Left* is a radical left party according to March 2012. The Communist Party of Luxembourg* is an extreme left party based on its symbol and website. In 2009 several radical left movements also created the Citizen's List, a protest party against the Lisbon Treaty.

- The Netherlands

March 2012 identifies the Socialist Party* as a radical far-left party.

- Norway

Norway has two radical far-left parties: the Socialist Left Party* (SP) (March 2012) and the Red Party* (Rødt). (Seierstad, 2012) Red is the merger of the Worker's Communist Party and the Red Electoral Alliance* (RV).

- Poland

Poland does not have far-left parties. However, the party Self-Defence (SRP) belongs to the group of Social Populist where radicalism is "both inconsistent and largely rhetorical". (March, 2012) Parties that usual belong in that group fuse "(...) left-wing and right-wing themes behind an anti-establishment appeal. Most of these parties are not acknowledged as left-wing by the radical left". (March, 2012, p.112). Moreover, in the Georgiadou et al. 2018 dataset, the SRP is classified and analyzed as a far-right party. Hence, even though scholars recognize its radicalism, in this study, it is considered a radical right party.

- Portugal

Portugal has a successful radical far-left party, Left Block* (BE) (March 2012). There are three communist parties: the Portuguese Communist Party* (PCP), the Workers Party of Socialist Unity* (POUS) and the Portuguese Workers' Communist Party/Re-Organized Movement of the Party of the Proletariat* (PCTP/MRPP). PCP is an extremist conservative communist party in the March 2012 data base. It is also leading the Unitary Democratic Coalition* (CDU) along with the Ecologist Party "The Greens" (PEV). The CDU also belongs in the extreme far-left family both in national and European politics. (Beaudonne and Gomez, 2015) The last two are minor conservative communist parties whose political character was evident by their manifestos and statements.

- Romania

According to March 2012 dataset, Romania has two far-left parties. The Socialist Labor Party* (PSM) is an extreme far-left party until 2003 and the Romanian Social Democratic Party (PSDR) a radical far-left until the parliamentary elections of 2000. March also refers to the remaining radical left part of PSM that formed the new Socialist Alliance* party (PAS). However, it has not gained any general support, and it is still a minor party.

- Slovakia

March 2012, identifies the Party of Civic Association as a radical far-left party, and the Communist Party of Slovakia* (KSS) and the Union of Workers in Slovakia* (ZRS) as extreme far-left parties. Direction–Social Democracy (SMER) is a particular case. According to March 2012, SMER is radical far-left party, and it belongs in the Social Populist category. On the report of CEEIdentity, a think-tank specialized in Eastern Europe's politics; SMER is a

party that needs further analysis. Specifically, in its analysis of SMER's manifesto in 2012, CEEIdentity states: "For liberal types, the manifesto is not sufficiently liberal, for national conservative type the national coloured issues are not sufficiently nationalist. Therefore, we categorize the manifesto to the right-wing liberal type, focusing on the perception of the EU, culture, and national minority." Hence, this study does not observe SMER's electoral support.

– Slovenia

Slovenia has no far-left parties. However, the parties Sustainable Economy of Slovenia (TRS) and Initiative of Democratic Socialism (IDS) which later formed The Left could be far-left parties. Both support excessive state intervention, regulation of financial markets and a different economic model, but there is not enough evidence for their identification.

– Spain

Spain has a vibrant left political scene, with a vast number of far-left parties that very often merge or form coalitions. The United Left-Izquierda Unida* (IU) is a successful radical left coalition. (Fagerholm, 2017) Its leader is the Communist Party of Spain* (PCE), a reformist extremist left party according to March 2012 database. However, IU has formed its own party identity and lately seems closer to centre-left, since it becomes a more office-seeking party that wants to be seen as an alternative to the Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) (Ştefuriuc and Verge, 2008). For this study, the IU is still a radical left party. For the parliamentary elections in 2011, IU formed a coalition with various green and minor extreme left parties, the Plural Left*, which also belongs in the far-left family in the European Parliament. Podemos, a successful radical far-left party in Spain, has also formed a coalition with the IU, the Unidos Podemos. Far-left can also be successful only inside some different states and regions. One example is Nós-Unidade Popular, an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist far-left party in Galicia. Finally, Spain has three minor extremists, Trotskyist political parties: the Revolutionary Anti-capitalist Left*, the Internationalist Socialist Workers' Party* and the Communist Unification of Spain. The electoral appeal of those three has only been observed for the European Elections of 2009.

– Sweden

The Left* (VP) is a radical far-left party (March 2012). There are also two minor communist parties, the Communist Party (K) and the Communist Party of Sweden (SKP) for which there are no sufficient sources. Nevertheless, they are extreme far-left parties because of their symbols, slogans, and manifestos.

– Switzerland

The Swiss Party of Labor* (PDA) is a radical far-left party (Gomez et al. 2015; Hug and Schulz, 2007). Solidarity* (SOL) is also a minor far-left party. Its manifesto supports workers initiative towards the creation of a socialist alternative against capitalism.

– United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has two radical far-left parties (March 2012): Respect* and Scottish Socialist Party*. The People Before Profit (PBP) could also be identified as a radical FLP since it emphasizes key left issues such as housing, national security expenses and workers power. However, more information is needed.

Chapter II: The Far Left Political Family's Electoral Support

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Since recently, FL parties had not received much attention from scholars, comparing to their - other-edge component- Far Right parties. Most of the empirical studies focus either on case studies either on specific aspects of RLPs such as populism or Euroskepticism (Beaudonnet and Gomez, 2016; Bowyer and Vail 2011; Sperber 2010; Vail 2009 Hough et al., 2007; Wessels 2007; Hooghe and Marks 2007). During the last decade, however, the far-left family has gained back the attention it deserves. More studies today try to explain the electoral success of the far-left family as a whole and compare left and right radicalism.

Radical Left Parties are radical because they reject the socioeconomic structure of capitalism and left because they want to introduce a new economic system based on income redistribution and state control. (Bale & Dunphy, 2011; Dunphy & Bale, 2011; March, 2012; March & Rommerskirchen, 2012; Rooduijn and Burgoon, 2017) Economic issues are the existential purpose and concern of RLPs (March, 2012).

Following this definition, I assume that in countries where income redistribution and public expenditure is low, voters incline more in left-wing ideologies.

H1: Disposable income and public expenditure affect the far-left support negatively.

This hypothesis, however, should be moderated by indicators of socioeconomic distress. Historically, the communist parties thrived in countries with intense socioeconomic problems. (Gherghina, 2011; Bartolini, 2000) Recent studies also focus on periods of economic distress, and they test whether the far-left support also emerges as a protest vote. (Rooduijn and Burgoon, 2017; Gomez et al., 2016; March and Rommerskirchen, 2012; Bowyer & Vail, 2011)

Income inequality can be a socioeconomic negative sign. A high Gini coefficient causes dissatisfaction about how the “system” works. Voters may come closer to left-wing radicalism, according to which an alternative economic system would solve the excessive inequalities. (Visser et al., 2013; Bowyer and Vail, 2011)

H2: An increase in Gini coefficient affects the far-left support positively.

Additionally, people affected by those inequalities may oppose taxes on products. Taxes on products are considered to deepen inequalities. (Gans, 1974; Kesselman, 1977) They disproportionately affect lower-income households, which consume a larger percentage of their income.¹

¹ Lower-income households cannot save or invest a considerable amount of their income. The most significant percentage of their earning is consumed in products and services. Therefore these households pay more on products and more taxes than the rest, as a percentage of their income (not in absolute values). Moreover, according to

H3: Tax on products affects the far-left support positively.

Finally, politically the most sensitive indicator of economic insecurity is unemployment. (Bohrer and Tan, 2000) Indeed, the unemployment rate may cause feelings of disappointment and anger that radicalise voters. RLPs prioritise labour issues and social security. (March and Rommerskirchen, 2012; Visser et al., 2013) Therefore, I expect that the higher the unemployment rate, the higher the far-left support.

H4: The unemployment rate increases far-left voting.

What has not been tested is whether involuntary part-time employment (IPT) is associated with FL vote. Individuals work part-time due to either unfavourable business conditions, or because they could not find full-time employment. (Cajner et al., 2014) Part-time employment has always been a way for the employers to reduce labour costs, during periods of economic recession, and recovery periods. (Tilly, 1991) Counter-cyclical variation is critical for the IPT rate. However, “there are also a number of secular or slow-moving market factors, such as industry structure” (Valletta et al., 2016 p.8) that can bring a structural change in IPT rates. (Cajner et al. 2014)

No matter the cause, the inability to find a full-time job causes a sentiment of injustice. RLPs’ agenda prioritises labour rights. They advocate the need for an alternative against the “unjust capitalist economic system”. As a result, they may gain support in countries where the current economic structure fails to assure a stable work.

H5: When involuntary part-time employment (IPT) increases, FL support increases.

We should not ignore that far-left vote is also associated with specific ideological convictions and social-class ‘niches’. The literature considers the working class as the electoral base of RLPs (Michelat and Simon, 2004). What is the working class today? The traditional class cleavage is decreasing. Union membership declines; the unionised and traditional industries in Western countries are reducing (Gray and Caul, 2000; Norris, 2008). Recent studies show that even if trade union membership is still statistically significant (Ramiro 2014), there is no difference between manual and non-manual workers (Visser et al. 2013). The traditional blue-collar worker’s profile does not seem to fit anymore. As Ramiro, 2014 puts it, “Radical Left inroads into new middle-class electorates”. After the ‘90s, radical left adopted new social issues from environmentalism to anti-war movements to feminism and gender equality. RLPs enriched their core ideology with issues more appealing to the middle class rather than the lower one.

One more reason why RLPs may have lost their traditional voters is the competition from the right. As mentioned in the previous chapter, RLPs advocate more national and cultural issues. While the class cleavage decreases, globalisation cleavage increases, and RLPs made

the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), consumers on low incomes cannot engage in markets effectively; they tend to lack consumer literacy, and they face difficulties in markets, which causes them to lose potential offers and discounts.

an excellent political opportunity out of it. (Brigevich, 2018; Santana & Rama, 2018; Kriesi et al., 2008) Globalisation has created losers and winners, and it polarises society. RRP's blame immigrants. Immigrants usually compete in the job market with blue-collar workers, and they offer a low-cost labour force. Therefore, blue-collar workers feel threatened, and they tend to seek "protection" in RRP's, rather than RLP's that do not own such issue. With that in mind, I test the following hypothesis:

H6a: "Contrary to popular belief, manual workers do not vote for RLP's."

H6b: "Manual rate decreases far-left support, supposing that when radicalised, manual workers vote for RRP's."

H7: "Union membership increases far-left support."

Finally, I assume that radical vote today is associated with the country's political past. A country's authoritarian regime may create different dynamics and social links. Indeed, Visser et al., 2013 found that people who live in a country with a legacy of an authoritarian regime are more likely to vote for RLP's than people who do not live in a country with this type of heritage.

Following Visser et al., 2013, I create a dichotomous variable named "autoregime", which equals to 1 if a country had an authoritarian regime from 1945 onwards. This also includes countries that had right-wing totalitarian regimes (e.g. Spain, Greece). I use this variable because like Visser et al. I believe that it is merely the authoritarian past, regardless of orientation, that creates those particular attitudes. In the case of a left wing authoritarian regime, people today (especially the oldest ones) may experience "communist nostalgia". In the case of right-wing regimes, it was the radical left movements that organised the resistance; there still might be a grateful feeling towards them. The model in Table 3 uses this variable to compare different results for the hypotheses H1-H7 depending on one's country political past.

Methodology

Studying electoral success is subject to numerous methodological difficulties. First, attempting an almost complete geographical coverage of Europe increases the heterogeneity between regions and countries. That said the use of panel estimators is imperative. Second, our sample is a mixture of observations with zero and positive values. But those zero values can be missing values, susceptible to a selection bias. The sample selection bias arises from the fact that we only observe support for RLP's in regions where such parties exist or in regions where electoral support is above a critical level, and data are available. Following Jackman and Volpert 1996, I run a Tobit regression that replaces the missing values with zero values and treats them as left-censored data. By introducing regional/country dummies in Tobit estimators, we deal with both heterogeneity and zero values. Those dummies, however, in a non-linear model, may cause the incidental parameters problem. Following Georgiadou et al. 2018, I solve this problem with Honoré's (1992) panel-Tobit estimator, which also does not sacrifice the need for dealing for heterogeneity.

I run five regressions. Model 1 is a fixed-effects and population-averaged linear model; Model 2 is a Tobit regression that left-censors the FL vote and uses the robust or sandwich

estimator of variance; Model 3 implements the estimators in Honoré (1992). Model 4 and 5 include the variable “autoregime”. Model 4 shows the results for the countries that had an authoritarian regime. To evaluate the fit of the model, I take into account only the pseudo- R^2 Honoré’s (1992) estimator. Once again, following the methodology used in Georgiadou et al. 2018, the prime concern is the consistent estimation of the effects of the covariates, rather than prediction. Moreover, Tobit model’s higher fitness might be somewhat misleading; when we introduce a large number of dummies in a short T panel, the increased fit might be a sign of overfitting.

Data Used

As mentioned before, the empirical study tests the above hypothesis in nuts2 dimensional and country-level aggregate data, for the 27 member states of the European Union as well as UK, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, from 2002 – 2013. For the independent variables, I use data from Eurostat, OECD and the World Bank. I include GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS), real growth rate, unemployment rate, and the long-term unemployment rate in nuts2 level. In the country level, I include the Gini coefficient, public expenditure, taxation on products, the rate of involuntary part-time employment, immigration rate, and the density of trade union members and manual workers.

There are various ways to measure the electoral success: percentage of national electoral support, obtaining of public office, participation in government, or seats obtained in the parliament. The choice of the appropriate measure depends on focus of analysis, party type and data availability. This empirical study considers not just the strongest party but the overall RLP performance. Therefore, the dependent variable is the vote share in every parliamentary and European election from 2002-2012. Table 1 shows the parties observed, as explained in Chapter 1.

Except for the party dataset that this thesis presents, there are the Chapel Hill expert surveys dataset and the Manifesto Project. The Manifesto project has been an effective data monopoly for over 40 years, and it is used to the majority of cooperative political studies. Scholars have often accused the Manifesto Project for noisy and non-reliable variation in party positions. (Benoit et al., 2009; Meyer and Jenny, 2013) Until 2009, each point was based on a single coding by a human coder and came with no estimate of associated error, creating a stochastic error from multiple independent human interpretative codings of the master documents. (Mikhaylov et al., 2012) In 2009, the Manifesto Project became the digitized Manifesto Corpus, which converts the documents to a machine-readable format and implements a digitized document coding procedure; Manifesto Corpus may resolve some methodological problems mainly by increasing the transparency of the data production. (Merz et al., 2016) However, it still “inherits some of the points of criticism related to the Manifesto Project’s approach: such as the coding scheme (Zulianello, 2013), the use of proxy documents (Gemenis, 2012) and the reliability of the coding (Mikhaylov et al., 2012).” (Merz et al., 2016 p. 6)

On the other hand, Chapel Hill expert survey seems a more valuable and reliable instrument; however, their validity has been called into question as well. Critics believe that experts may have different personal attitudes towards the left-right axis, which leads to different results, and questions the cross-national comparability of those surveys. Nevertheless, those fears have not been proven. Various studies suggest that CHES data display quite high levels of inter-expert reliability. (Steenbergen and Marks, 2007; Lindstädt et al., 2018) This thesis also supports that following experts and case studies surveys are the most reliable. Instead, however, to follow the CHES data, I chose to create a unique dataset, in

order not only to add more observations but also to make those observations more understandable to the reader and myself.

The data for the electoral results applied in this thesis is based on material from the “European Election Database”². The data are collected from original sources, prepared and made available by the NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)³.

Table 1: Party Observations

<i>Country</i>	<i>Party</i>
Austria	Socialist Left Party (PSL), Communist Party of Austria (USSR), Electoral Leftist Alliance (LINKE)
Belgium	Workers Party of Belgium (PDVA- PTB), Left Socialist Party (PSL/LSP), Revolutionary Communist League (LCP)
Bulgaria	Bulgarian Workers' Socialist Party (BWSP), Bulgarian Communist Party "Fatherland" (BCP_F), Bulgarian Workers' Party (BWP)
Croatia	Socialist Labor Party (SRP)
Cyprus	Progressive Party of the Working People (AKEL)
Czech Republic	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM), Party of Democratic Socialism (SDS)
Denmark	Socialist People's Party (SF), Red-Green Alliance-Unity List
Estonia	Estonian United Left Party (EÜVP), Estonian United People's Party (EÜRP)
Finland	Left Alliance (V), Communist Workers Party (KTP), Communist League, Communist Party of Finland (SKP)
France	Communist Party (PCF), Worker's Struggle (LO), Revolutionary Communist League (LCR)
Germany	The Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), The Left (LINKE), the Socialist Equality Party (PSG), Marxist–Leninist Party of Germany (MLPD), German Communist Party (DKP)
Greece	Communist Party of Greece (KKE), Syriza, Workers Revolutionary Part (EEK), Organization for the Reconstruction of the Communist Party of Greece (OAKKE), Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Greece (mlKKE), Communist Party of Greece (Marxist-Leninist) (KKEmI), The Front of the Greek Anti-capitalistic Left, Synaspismos
Hungary	Hungarian Worker's Party (Munkáspárt)
Iceland	Left-Green Alliance (VG), Rainbow (RB)
Ireland	The Socialist Party (SP), Sinn Fein (SF), Workers' Party (WP), Socialist Workers' Party (SWP)
Italy	Communist Party (PCL)
Lithuania	Labor Party (DP)

² The database publishes regional election results according to the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS), level 1 to 3. Data are collected from national election authorities, national statistical agencies and other official sources.

³ NSD is not responsible for the analyses/interpretation of the data presented here.

Luxembourg	The Left, The Communist Party of Luxembourg
The Netherlands	The Socialist Party
Norway	Socialist Left Party (SP), Red Party (Rødt)
Portugal	Left Block (BE), Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), Workers Party of Socialist Unity (POUS), Portuguese Workers' Communist Party/Re-Organized Movement of the Party of the Proletariat (PCTP/MRPP)
Romania	Socialist Labor Party (PSM), Socialist Alliance Party (PAS)
Slovakia	Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS), Union of Workers in Slovakia (ZRS)
Slovenia	No parties observed
Spain	United Left-Izquierda Unida (IU), Communist Party of Spain (PCE), Plural Left, Revolutionary Anti-capitalist Left, Internationalist Socialist Workers' Party
Sweden	The Left (VP)
Switzerland	The Swiss Party of Labor (PDA), Solidarity (SOL)
United Kingdom	Respect, Scottish Socialist Party

Results

The results in Table 2 confirm hypotheses H2. H3. H4 and H5, concerning the effect of economic conditions. Gini coefficient (H2), tax on products (H3), unemployment (H4) and involuntary part-time (H5) have a strong association with the support for RLPs. Especially the IPT coefficient has the most significant impact on RL vote. A 1% rise in IPR coefficient, increases far-left support by 54% ($p < 0.01$). Accordingly, a 1% rise in unemployment gives rise 10% in RLPs voting share ($p < 0.1$).

H1 is partially confirmed. Disposable income is not statistically relevant in any of the three regressions. However, we observe a strong negative relationship between public expenditure and far-left support ($p < 0.01$). However, we also need to take into account the efficiency of public expenditure and investments. Voters do not evaluate the amounts spent, but the results of such policies. Public expenditure may rise because of corruption, of high administration costs Etc.

Like Ramiro 2014, union membership affects the support for RLPs positively ($p < 0.01$). Manual workers, however, do not vote for RLPs. *Ceteris paribus*, when the percentage of manual workers increases, the FL support decreases. Those results verify the H6 and H7 hypotheses and indicate that the traditional class cleavage, or at least the way we use to observe it in European societies has changed. RLPs today compete with RRP for what it used to be the RL's traditional electoral base, blue-collar workers. If "Radical Left inroads into new middle-class electorates" (Ramiro 2014) is yet to be seen; those results cannot be conclusive, and further research is necessary.

Table 2: Support for RLPs

VARIABLES	(1) FE	(2) Tobit	(3) Honoré
Disposable Income	0.0000 (0.0001)	0.0000 (0.0001)	0.0003 (0.0004)
Unemployment	10.9799*** (3.6123)	10.0293*** (3.1268)	17.0067* (10.1322)
Involuntary part-time	54.1141*** (10.0299)	35.6174*** (9.2362)	195.5339*** (44.6791)
Gini coefficient	0.0572* (0.0308)	0.1312*** (0.0410)	0.4318* (0.2510)
Public expenditure	-0.0004*** (0.0001)	-0.0005*** (0.0001)	-0.0022*** (0.0006)
Taxation on products	1.1376*** (0.1677)	1.2116*** (0.1387)	2.3231*** (0.3896)
Union membership (Density in nuts2)	0.0966*** (0.0213)	0.1321*** (0.0225)	0.1813*** (0.0369)
Manual workers (% in nuts2 population)	-20.7891*** (5.3449)	-27.9077*** (5.5651)	-48.7937*** (12.2530)
Immigration	-0.0296* (0.0179)	-0.0545** (0.0217)	-0.0407 (0.0984)
Constant	-8.2839* (4.3909)	-5.7341 (3.8710)	
Observations	496	496	496
R-squared	0.6530		
Number of nuts_2	181		

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Even though I do not have a hypothesis concerning the country's immigration level, I test for the percentage of immigrants (of the total population). According to the first two models in Table 2, the immigration coefficient is negative and statistically significant. In the Honoré (1992) regression, however, immigration stops being significant. We may assume that, with all equal, an increase in immigration level decreases the far-left vote because of the increase of far-right support. However, studies about the causal effect of immigration on electoral preferences are not yet conclusive. Several studies find contradictory results and mention that the association between immigration and electoral support is not straight forward. (Lonsky, 2020; Georgiadou et al., 2018; Sørensen, 2016; Gochenour and Nowrasteh, 2014)

To further test my results, in Table 3, I run the same Honoré model as in Table 2, but with fixed year effects. My goal is to exclude the influence of aggregate trends which have nothing to do with the causal relationships. The base year is 2002. The years 2003 and 2012 have been omitted. The coefficients for involuntary part-time, Gini coefficient, union membership and manual workers percentage are similar with Table 2. Nevertheless, we observe some contradictory results. The unemployment rate is not statistically significant when controlled for fixed year effects. Public expenditure seems to harm RLPs support, as expected, but the coefficient is not statistically significant. Taxation on products, however, does have a significant association with far-left support ($p < 0.01$), but this time the casual relationship is negative. When the tax on products increases, the far-left vote decreases. Finally, one should consider the robustness of the model when testing with fixed year effects. One solution will be to check if the results are more robust with a linear model. Nevertheless, this is not tested in this thesis.

Table 3: Fixed Year Effects

VARIABLES	Base Year 2002
Disposable Income	-0.0001 (0.0001)
Unemployment	-1.6261 (2.0324)
Involuntary part-time	217.6137*** (57.8917)
Gini coefficient	1.0367*** (0.2302)
Public expenditure	-0.0209 (0.0163)
Taxation on products	-0.0012*** (0.0004)
Union membership (Density in nuts2)	2.8528*** (0.4912)
Manual workers (% in nuts2 population)	-37.7991** (19.0015)
Immigration	11.6944 (10.4234)
Observations	496

Standard errors in parentheses
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$
Honoré

When testing for the different political past, we observe some interesting results. Table 4 and Table 2 show the same results for H1. Gini coefficient is statistically significant for both country categories. However, it has a positive impact in countries with authoritarian past, and a negative one in countries which do not have such a heritage. The outcome of unemployment coefficient also poses some questions. Whereas in Table 2 has a significant positive effect, in Table 4 has a negative impact that is statistically important only in countries without authoritarian past. The results for H2 and H4 show that in countries without a totalitarian heritage (mainly the western European ones) far-left vote does not function as a protest vote against economic distress. However, Table 4 shows that involuntary part-time is a crucial variable in countries without an authoritarian regime in the past ($p < 0.01$). In contrast, in countries without such heritage, the impact of IPT is negative and non-significant Hypothesis 3 is accepted for both country categories. Tax on products has a positive and significant association. However, it has a greater impact in countries without a totalitarian heritage.

Table 4: The effect of authoritarian regimes in FL vote

VARIABLES	(1) Authoritarian Past	(2) No Authoritarian Past
Disposable Income	-0.0000** (0.0000)	-0.0000 (0.0000)
Unemployment	-1.3786 (0.9015)	-0.4585* (0.2784)
Involuntary part-time	-1.5672 (1.4140)	462.3078*** (22.9941)
Gini coefficient	0.0317*** (0.0065)	-0.2649*** (0.0158)
Public expenditure	-0.0000 (0.0000)	-0.0019*** (0.0001)
Taxation on products	0.0539*** (0.0159)	3.0191*** (0.1491)
Union membership (Density in nuts2)	0.0074*** (0.0023)	0.3505*** (0.0183)
Manual workers (% in nuts2 population)	-3.4755*** (0.9671)	10.0822*** (0.7076)
Immigration	-0.0275*** (0.0049)	0.0944*** (0.0053)
Observations	239	257

Standard errors in parentheses
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

The association of trade union membership and far-left support remains the same in Table 4. For both categories, it has a high level of significance ($p < 0.01$). When it comes to H6 and the class cleavage, we see that the percentage of manual workers is statistically significant for both country categories, but with the opposite association. In countries with authoritarian past, manual workers percentage decreases far-left support, whereas in countries without an authoritarian past it has a positive effect. The countries without a totalitarian heritage are mainly the western European countries; the ones where the class cleavage has a longer history and stronger fundamentals. As a result, it is reasonable to see union membership density and manual workers percentage to have a more significant positive impact in those countries.

Nevertheless, the most striking result is the coefficient of immigration. This time, the Honoré model in Table 4, finds immigration statistically relevant ($p < 0.01$), but with opposite results. In countries with an authoritarian past, immigration decreases support for RLPs; in countries without an authoritarian past, immigration increases support for RLPs.

Finally, when we analyze the above results, we should keep in mind that the number of observations in Table 4 (less than 300 in each column) maybe is not enough to extract safe results.

CONCLUSION

This thesis gives evidence for three main questions regarding RLPs. Is far-left a coherent party family? What are the socioeconomic factors that determine far-left support? Is far-left voting a protest vote?

In Chapter I, I analyzed the far-left party family and its particular features. RLPs advocate the need for an alternative to the capitalist economic system. Their ideological core consists of socioeconomic issues; they usually demand more state intervention and more labour rights. However, it is a highly fragmented family. Ramiro, 2016 empirically tested if we should consider all RLPs as a part of the same political family. According to his findings, we could divide far-left parties into two categories: "Old" Left parties and the "New" Left parties, depending on how much they have adopted "new politics" issues. Nevertheless, the voters' profiles remained the same (Ramiro, 2016; March, 2012), so I presided to the empirical study considering far-left party family as unified.

The party data set also includes minor far-left parties that have not been identified before. Scholars may use it to understand better the multiple faces of RLPs by country. The FL family suffers from leadership rivalries and organizational differences. As a result, RLPs split into smaller organizations and lose their influence. This thesis tried not to "penalize" FL support for this particular circumstance and all the minor parties, whose support was included in the European Election Database, have been included in the empirical study.

I run three models with the same research question, in order to find the socioeconomic factors determining the FL support. The most accurate one is the Honoré model (1992). All the models in Table 2 prove my initial hypotheses, except for the first part of the HI. The disposable income is not statistically significant. The economic issues seem to be the most critical factors. The unemployment rate, tax on products, and the Gini coefficient affect the RLPs positively. Public expenditure has a significant negative association with FL voting. When it comes to the class cleavage, whereas the trade union participation still affects the RLPs positively, the manual workers' percentage has a robust negative association, indicating that RLPs might compete with the RRP for their old electoral base, blue-collar workers.

The most interesting result in this empirical study is the coefficient of involuntary part-time employment. Scholars usually test for the unemployment country rate or the employment status of an individual. However, the IRT rate of a country can also be very enlightening about the market conditions in the economy. When people are obliged to get a part-time job that does not meet their needs, because of an economic recession or because of weak labour rights, they seek for a political power that advocates the need of a change in the market structure. RLPs have labour rights and equal opportunities as a priority.

Variables like unemployment, IPT, public expenditure, taxation and Gini coefficient can show periods of economic distress. RLPs can have indeed both ideologically committed electorate and protest voters. In order to test further, whether the FL vote can also be a protest vote, I run the same Honoré (1992) model as in Table 2 with fixed year effects. My initial hypotheses are confirmed, but the most indicating variable, the unemployment rate, does not have a statistically significant association with far-left support. Further research on the recent European economic crisis and the ascension of populist radical left parties may shed more

light on this question. Hence, in order to have more conclusive results, one needs to analyze both demand and supply-side factors during periods of distress.

Even though I considered all RLPs as members of the same political family, the empirical study showed evidence against this initial assumption. There were differences between voters from countries without an authoritarian past and voters from countries with an authoritarian past. The Gini coefficient, manual workers percentage and immigration had opposite results. In countries with a long democratic history (mainly the Western European countries), the class cleavages remain stronger. Manual workers in those countries still support RLPs. It is not easy, however, to interpret the immigration impact. To do so, we have to look closer to the supply side. What is the competition with RLPs? What are the differences between old and new left parties according to the immigration level?

One more significant difference is the coefficient of the involuntary part-time (IPT). Whereas in the first column, it has a relatively small, negative and no statistically significant impact, in the second column, it has a very significant positive association. Consequently, I attribute the important results of IPT in table 2 only to the parties in countries without a totalitarian heritage. In countries with old and solid political ties, the voters' expectations are higher. Voters in such countries are used to high democratic representation and demand efficiency by their politicians (Berger, 2009). On the other hand, in countries with an authoritarian past, voters may not know their rights or may not feel comfortable yet to pursue them via the relatively new political scene.

Consequently, we should not underestimate the fact that far-left is a highly fragmented family. RLPs adopt different "new politics" issues and advocate different levels of radicalism. Their support is sensitive to one's country context and political past, making it difficult to study west and eastern RLPs simultaneously.

The empirical study shows only general tendencies of FL voting factors, which align with previous studies (Ramiro, 2016; Visser et al., 2013; March, 2012). All the aggregated variables above generally remain important through the years, but the different decades pose different challenges to RLPs. To have the full picture, we have to look both in the supply and demand side of the FL family. I hope that the complete data set in this thesis will help the more profound understanding of the FL party family.

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